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Message Text

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ACTION A-01

INFO OCT-01 ARA-07 ISO-00 SS-07 H-03 NSC-06 SSO-00
NSCE-00 /025 W
----------067096 171431Z /50
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FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3237

C O N F I D E N T I A L BOGOTA 7642

FOR ACTG ASST SECRETARY STEDMAN

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PGOV, PBOR, PN, CO OREP (HOLLINGS, ERNEST)
SUBJ: PANAMA CANAL AGREEMENT, CODEL HOLLINGS

REF: STATE 191921

1. SENATORS HOLLINGS AND SCOTT HELD HOUR-LONG MEETINGS WITH PRESIDENT LOPEZ AND WITH FOREIGN MINISTER LIEVANO YESTERDAY DISCUSSING VARIETY OF SUBJECTS BUT PRINCIPALLY THE QUESTION OF THE NEW PANAMA CANAL TREATY. THEIR CONVERSATIONS WERE CORDIAL AND BUSINESS-LIKE. SENATOR SCOTT REMAINED ADAMANT IN HIS OPPOSITION TO THE NEW TREATY. WHILE THIS WAS OF COURSE UNFORTUNATE HIS EXCHANGES WITH THESE TWO TOP GOC LEADERS AT LEAST HAD THE MERIT OF ACQUAINTING THEM AT FIRST HAND WITH THE NATURE OF THE OPPOSITION IN THE SENATE. SENATOR HOLLINGS, WHO HANDLED HIMSELF SUPERBLY IN THESE MEETINGS, WAS MUCH MORE RECEPTIVE TO WHAT LOPEZ AND LIEVANO HAD TO SAY IN SUPPORT OF THE NEW TREATY. WE WILL BE REPORTING IN GREATER DETAIL ON THESE CONVERSATIONS IN SEPTEL BUT WANTED TO LET DEPT KNOW IMMEDIATELY THAT JUST PRIOR TO DEPARTURE, BOTH HOLLINGS AND SENATE SECRETARY KIMMIT REMARKED TO EMBOFFS THAT THEIR CONVERSATIONS HERE HAD CAUSED THEM TO REASSESS THEIR PREVIOUS DOUBTS ABOUT THE TREATY AND THAT NOW THEY WERE BOTH VEERING TOWARDS SUPPORT OF IT.
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2. PRESIDENT LOPEZ EXPRESSED TO HOLLINGS AND SCOTT HIS CONTINUED CONCERN ABOUT A POSSIBLE INCREASE IN PANAMA CANAL TOLLS. HE ENVISAGED PANAMA'S PRESSING FOR SUCH AN INCREASE IF CURRENT REVENUES WERE NOT SUFFICIENT TO FUND THE ECONOMIC PACKAGE WE WERE PLEDGED TO OR IF PANAMA'S DOMESTIC FINANCES GOT INTO A TROUBLED STATE. NONETHELESS

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BOTH LOPEZ AND LIEVANO BASICALLY SUPPORTED THE NEW TREATY
IN THEIR TALKS WITH THE SENATORS. THEREFORE, I MET
LATER WITH FOREIGN MINISTER LIEVANO AND TOLD HIM THAT WE WOULD
FIND IT VERY HELPFUL AND IMPORTANT IF THE GOC COULD ISSUE A
HIGH-LEVEL STATEMENT IN FAVOR OF OUR NEXTAGREEMENT WITH
PANAMA. I ALSO SAID THAT IT WOULD BE VERY DESIRABLE TO HAVE THIS
RELEASED THROUGH COLOMBIAN EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON IN ORDER TO
BRING IT TO ATTENTION OF A WIDE US AUDIENCE. LIEVANO WAS VERY
RECEPTIVE TO OUR SUGGESTION AND SAID HE WOULD DISCUSS IT WITH
PRESIDENT LOPEZ, IN ORDER TO NUDGE THE COLOMBIANS A BIT FURTHER,
I WOULD RECOMMEND THAT AFTER A FEW DAYS DEPT CONTACT COLOMBIAN
AMBASSADOR BARCO IN WASHINGTON, INFORM HIM OF MY CONVERSATION
WITH LIEVANO AND ASK HIM IF HE HAS RECEIVED ANY INSTRUCTIONS
YET.
DREXLER

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